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REMARKS AS DELIVERED BY  
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U.S.-China Engagement: The Role of Military-to-Military Contacts

Good Morning. Thank you, General Xing, for your kind introduction. I am delighted to be in China and honored to be here at your National Defense University.

Being here this morning brings to mind my visit to China ten years ago in the company of the then-Army Chief of Staff, General John Wickham, Jr. We were very impressed then, but I must tell you that the effects of your rapid economic growth and the massive amounts of construction in China are breathtaking. But these changes are not quite as breathtaking as the change in our political relations.

It has been twenty-five years now since President Nixon journeyed to China, where he and Premier Zhou Enlai approved the Shanghai Communiqué, breaking a quarter century of hostility and misunderstanding, and laying the foundation for a more fruitful bilateral relationship. Later on, both of our countries came to owe a special debt of gratitude to the late Deng Xiaoping, whose pragmatism and vision provided the foundation for the rapid economic development of China, as well as the rapid expansion of cooperation between our two countries.

Today, one statistic speaks volumes about the level of our interaction: there are more than 40,000 Chinese students in American universities and schools. Who would have imagined that 25 years ago?

But now, following diplomatic gains, student exchanges, and our many business ventures, our two nations are pursuing military-to-military ties to improve communications, reduce potential misunderstandings, and carry out mutually beneficial activities. Some of these military to military contacts will be symbolically important, even if relatively simple affairs, like the visit of two Chinese destroyers and an oiler to Pearl Harbor and to San Diego, California in March of this year.

By the way, I am happy to report that, while the U.S. won in basketball, we played soccer to a hard-fought tie. But I have to tell you, our naval commanders were worried that they might have to face a Chinese team in gymnastics or ping-pong!

But at the same time, there are aspects of our military-to-military ties that are more substantive. As you know, then-Defense Secretary William Perry visited China in 1994 and General Chi visited the United States last December and spoke at our National Defense University. While he was there, General Chi neatly summarized why he came to America, and indeed, why I am here today.

General Chi said: "so long as we make concerted efforts in the spirit of equality and consultation, our military-to-military ties will continue to move forward and give positive impetus to the improvement and the growth of relations between [our] two countries."

So, with improving our military to military contacts in mind, I would like to discuss with you the United States National Security policy, how our Armed Forces are organized to protect our interests, and the importance of the Asia-Pacific region, where, as General Chi noted, both the United States and China are "major powers."

To begin, the U.S. National Security Strategy, the strategy that guides our diplomatic, economic, and defense policy has changed considerably since 1989. With the end of the Cold War and a significant decline in the threat from the former-Soviet Union, we have developed a new National Security Strategy. Our new strategy hinges on Engagement, engagement with old friends and old adversaries alike.

The goals of our strategy are: to enhance our security with effective diplomatic representation abroad; to deter war but, should deterrence fail to be ready with military forces that are prepared to fight and win; to bolster America's economic revitalization, primarily by means of free and open trade; and to promote democracy abroad.

Our new national strategy and a declining threat have enabled us to cut our military personnel by one-third, that's a reduction of 700,000 high quality volunteers, the soul of our Armed Forces and the real source of our military power. Today, worldwide, the United States has less than 1.5 million people in its active forces. In terms of combat formations, we have reduced Army divisions and Air Force wings by 45 percent, and Navy ships by 38 percent. Our defense budget has been reduced by 40 percent over its high point in the Cold War. And as some of you may know, three days after I leave China, we will announce the results of a major defense review, one that will result in further modest cuts to our Armed Forces.

In the interest of transparency, I have asked the staff here to distribute some charts, which show the current location and status of all of our forces worldwide. These charts are from the detailed *Department of Defense Annual Report*, a few copies of which I will give your President for your library. I will also leave behind a series of publications that detail the characteristics of nearly every major American weapons system, as well as other pieces of equipment.

But data on our force structure doesn't tell the whole story of the U.S. Armed Forces after the Cold War.

In America, many observers noted with some irony that the Cold War was followed by a hot peace! After the Cold War, we found ourselves faced with some new regional aggressors, like Iraq, as well as some old ones, like North Korea. Those were the greatest and most immediate threats to our interests.

But after the Cold War, we also found a world adrift in a sea of instability, with disintegrating states, ethnic conflicts, the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the rise of sophisticated terrorist movements.

To protect our interests, U.S. forces together with those of our friends and allies have had to carry out a number of operations around the world in such places as Bosnia, Haiti, and the Middle East. Most of these operations have been peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, or operations to evacuate civilians, including on several occasions, Chinese citizens from war-torn areas. Interestingly, none of our major operations have taken place in the Asia-Pacific region, which, compared to Europe, Africa, and the Middle East is an island of relative stability.

As you might suspect, as the environment evolved and our appreciation for this "new world" evolved, so has our defense strategy. We abandoned the Cold War strategy of containment and the bilateral competition of the Cold War. While we cut back our forces, we re-oriented them on the need to respond to two, nearly simultaneous, major military conflicts, such as we might face with Iraq or North Korea.

But, over time, this "two major conflict" posture, as important as it was, failed to adequately describe the whole set of requirements that faced our Armed Forces. As we worked to build a strategy to guide our forces into the Twenty-first Century, we came to see our key tasks in a new light.

For the future, our Armed Forces worldwide will focus on three tasks. First, we will seek to shape the strategic environment, hoping to prevent the conditions that cause war, or at the very least, deter war from breaking out. Along with diplomacy and trade, our forces can shape a more peaceful and stable environment by forward presence, security assistance to our friends and

allies, and military to military contacts, which promote communications and help to reduce misunderstanding.

But our attempts to shape the environment and to prevent conflict will not succeed everywhere, all the time. As a second major task, we believe that, when deterrence fails, we must be ready to respond across the full spectrum of crises when it is in our interest to do so. While we remain prepared for multiple major contingencies, whether in Korea or the Middle East, we recognize that the most likely form of conflict that we will face will be a smaller-scale contingency operation. Included in these operations are humanitarian assistance, non-combatant evacuations, as we recently did in Albania, or peace keeping operations, as now going on in Bosnia.

Whatever the level of our involvement, we believe that we must also prepare for asymmetric threats, such as terrorism, the use of chemical or biological weapons by an adversary, and even attacks on our information infrastructure abroad or in the United States.

As a final task, we believe that the U.S. Armed Forces must prepare now with a prudent modernization program to meet the challenges of an uncertain future, one that promises to be as challenging as today's environment. I tell my staff that modernization spending today is the foundation of readiness tomorrow. After a decade of limited investment, the United States Armed Forces must have an investment program, that unites our efforts to replace old and aging equipment and adapt to the Revolution in Military Affairs, with efficient acquisition and management techniques.

In the next decade, our nation will probably not spend more on defense than we do at present. To afford modernization, we will have to work harder and work smarter. And part of improving our forces in the future will come from harmonizing the force development efforts of all of our services and our unified commands. A year ago, we published *Joint Vision 2010*, based on new operational concepts, which will guide the development of our Armed Forces for the next 15 years. Everything -- doctrine, training, senior officer education, requirements, procurement -- all of these things hopefully will be influenced by *Joint Vision 2010* and its implementation documents. Again, in the interests of transparency, I will leave copies of this document with your President.

So, that is the essence of our new defense strategy: shape a peaceful and stable environment, respond to crises and conflicts as necessary, and prepare for the future with a balanced, sensible, coordinated modernization program.

How does all of this apply to our policies in the Asia-Pacific region?

Today, in the Asia-Pacific region the United States has vital security and economic interests, some of which have roots that are more than a century old. Because of its geography and its interests, the United States is and will remain a major power in the Asia-Pacific region.

First, geographically, we are, just as China is, a Pacific nation. The Pacific Ocean washes the coast of the continental United States and the states of Alaska and Hawaii. When I go home to the state of Washington, on the west coast of the United States, I awake each day to the sounds of the Pacific Ocean. And the state of Hawaii and our territories extend thousands of miles into the Pacific.

But we realize that we are not alone in the Asia-Pacific region. We realize that this vast region is an area where four great powers have overlapping interests. In this century, we have fought three wars in this region. And in the next century, we do not wish to repeat that.

Second, we have major allies and friends like Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines, who also want our presence in the region as a force for peace and stability. In keeping with that, the United States, ashore and afloat, maintains about 100,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines in the Asia-Pacific region.

Indeed, among our friends and allies, there is some misplaced anxiety that we may soon reduce our military presence in the region. On that issue, let me repeat what Secretary of Defense Cohen recently said. We have no plans to reduce our troop presence in the Asia-Pacific region. To reduce our troop presence could destabilize the region and could set off a heated arms race in the area. And thus, we think the whole region, including China, benefits from our presence.

But having allies presupposes that they see a common threat. It is fair to ask: what specific threats do the United States and our friends and allies see in the Asia-Pacific region?

First, and most threatening, is the unpredictable regime in Pyongyang, which poses a major threat to peace on the Korean peninsula and in the surrounding area. This threat is magnified by the regime's current economic problems and its apparent inability to feed its population. This is a sad situation. Today, the security situation on the Korean peninsula is worse than it was 25 years ago, when I served there as a military planner.

Let me add that we continue to welcome China's active participation in the four power talks and its bilateral efforts to help reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula. And we appreciate China's efforts to help us keep nuclear weapons off of the Korean peninsula.

Other threats in the region may come in the form of nuclear, chemical, and missile technology proliferation both in the region and coming from the region. We are, in that light, very concerned about arms transfers by China to Pakistan and to Iran.

In the region, there are also some significant territorial disputes concerning Japan's Northern Territories, as well as islands in the South China Sea. And finally, drug trafficking and the ever-present potential for terrorism are both cause for concern.

In addition to these specific, well-known threats to peace and stability, there are also uncertainties that concern every nation in the region. Among these uncertainties is what will happen this summer with the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. As the clock in Tiananmen Square counts down the hours, we hope that the reversion of this vibrant city to Chinese control takes place peacefully and with respect for the welfare and the human rights of the people involved.

On the issue of Taiwan, the United States remains committed to our policy of One China, as defined in the three communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act, the U.S. law on this issue. Again, we hope for the resolution of the issue, which is clearly a matter for the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits to resolve in a peaceful manner.

But we are all also concerned with the peace and stability of the region and in the surrounding international waters. I would be remiss, if I did not add here, that last March we were concerned by the harsh rhetoric and some of the military actions in that area, that may have had unpredictable consequences. We are pleased that this situation is beginning to move onto the more constructive path of rational dialog. We hope, as I am sure you do, that future developments concerning Taiwan will take place peacefully, with full respect for the welfare and human rights of the people involved, as well as for freedom of navigation in the area.

A final reason why the United States will remain a major power in the Asia-Pacific region is that the U.S., like China, is a trading nation, with one-third of our annual product tied to our exports and our imports. The Asia-Pacific region is not only the engine of world economic growth, but it is also home to five of America's "top ten" trading partners. U.S. trade with East Asia alone surpasses 400 billion dollars, annually accounting for more than 3 million American jobs, and 40 percent of our total trade.

Thus, for both economic and security reasons, we in the United States believe that peace, prosperity, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region are vital to our interests. And we know that to a large extent you share many of those same interests.

China is a Great Power, and it is rapidly becoming a Greater Power. And believe me, we see your development, as being in our interest. I am told that there are some people here in China, who believe that the United States seeks to contain China. Nothing could be further from the truth. Containment would have to include severe political, economic, and military policies, none of which are in evidence in our policy toward China. Our interests can only be served, in the words of Secretary of State Madeline Albright, "by a China that is neither threatening nor threatened." In the information age, at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our security and prosperity, and your security and prosperity are inextricably linked.

President Clinton said that we are anxious to see a China that is "stable politically and open economically, that respects human rights and the rule of law, and that becomes a full partner in building a secure international order."

The mutual interests of China and the United States demand better understanding, clearer communications, greater confidence, and deeper cooperation. And military-to-military contacts must be an essential part of all that.

But these military-to-military contacts must not remain limited to occasional meetings between senior officers, or routine troop or ship visits. To be a fruitful form of engagement, our military-to-military contacts must deepen and become more frequent, more balanced, and more developed.

Our mutual goals are easy to understand. We, as two of the great powers in the Asia-Pacific region, both seek to decrease suspicion, further mutually beneficial military cooperation, and lessen the chances for miscalculation in a crisis.

For our part, to accomplish these objectives, the United States wants: a more equal exchange of information with the PLA; the development of confidence building measures to reduce further the possibility of miscalculations; military academic and functional exchanges; PLA participation in multinational military activities; and a regular dialog between our senior military leaderships.

We want these things for our own interests, and we are sure that China has a similar list. Let's compare our lists!

One item that should be on both of our lists is the completion of the Military Maritime and Air Cooperation Agreement. This latter agreement will improve our protocols for communications between our forces at sea and in the air. It will create common expectations and lessen the possibility of miscalculation throughout the vast Pacific Ocean area.

But we should not fool ourselves. Improving our military-to-military contacts will not be easy. And in order to earn big dividends, we must make a big investment. If we listen to the suspicious side of our military minds, if we don't pursue exchanges on a fair and equitable basis, if we lack openness, transparency, or reciprocity, or if we hold back even routine information on our military forces, then we will fail.

To succeed, we will have to overcome our past and struggle up-hill against our suspicions to reach the point, where, together, we can with greater confidence see a better future. But if we make that climb, if we get to the top, we will know the truth of the words spoken by Zhou Enlai to President Nixon: " ... on perilous peaks dwells beauty in its infinite variety. "

Thank you for your attention. I am ready for your questions.